

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SP-02 USIA-06 AID-05 EB-08 NSC-05

TRSE-00 SS-15 STR-05 OMB-01 CEA-01 IGA-02 IO-13

CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 OES-07 /088 W

-----063680 281258Z /50

R 261420Z SEP 77

FM AMEMBASSY KIGALI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5293

INFO AMEMBASSY BUJUMBURA

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

AMCONSUL BUKAVU

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JOINT STATE/AID MESSAGE

NAIROBI FOR REDSO/EA

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAID, RW

SUBJECT: CEPGL SEEKS AMERICAN SUPPORT

1. SUMMARY: REPRESENTATIVES OF TRILATERAL GREAT LAKES ECONOMIC COMMUNITY HAVE APPEALED FOR US FINANCIAL AND TECHNICAL HELP FOR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS. PROBABLY AT INSTIGATION OF RESPECTIVE PRESIDENTS (RWANDA, BURUNDI, ZAIRE), APPEAL WAS COUCHED IN TERMS OF ORGANIZATION'S GOALS OF REGIONAL STABILITY AND SECURITY AS WELL AS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. THIS EMBASSY BELIEVES A POSITIVE RESPONSE IS IN ORDER. END SUMMARY.

2. THE VERY BRIGHT MURUNDI WHO SERVES AS EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF CEPGL, BONAVENTURE KIDWINGIRA, CALLED ON ME WITH HIS DEPUTY SEPTEMBER 23 TO APPEAL FOR ACTIVE
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US SUPPORT IN EFFORTS TO ORGANIZE A GENUINE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY AMONG RWANDA, BURUNDI AND ZAIRE. KIDWINGIRA DESCRIBED SPECIFIC PROJECTS UNDERTAKEN AT BUJUMBURA CEPGL SUMMIT EARLIER THIS MONTH, INCLUDING FORMATION OF REGIONAL INVESTMENT BANK; PLANS FOR FREE MOVEMENT OF GOODS AND PERSONS ACROSS NATIONAL BORDERS; AND A JOINT TRANSPORTATION PLAN TO EASE LAND-LOCKED

AREA'S DIFFICULTIES.

3. KIDWINGIRA OBSERVED THAT, AMONG FRIENDS OF THREE MEMBER NATIONS, UNITED STATES IS THE MOST IMPORTANT OUTSIDE DONOR AND POLITICAL SUPPORTER (THANKS TO OUR INVOLVEMENT IN ZAIRE). HE SAID PRESIDENTS OF THREE COUNTRIES WERE AWARE THAT THEIR EFFORT AT ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL COOPERATION WAS OF INTEREST TO THE UNITED STATES AS AN ELEMENT AFFECTING REGIONAL STABILITY. THEY THEREFORE LOOKED TO THE UNITED STATES, HE CONTINUED, FOR ACTIVE SUPPORT AND FINANCIAL/TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE IN CARRYING OUT JOINT DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS TO CEMENT THEIR RELATIONSHIP. POINTEDLY, KIDWINGIRA REMARKED THAT TRILATERAL GROUPING HAD ORIGINALLY BEEN SET UP (IN 1973?) AS A MUTUAL SECURITY PACT, BUT MEMBERS NOW BELIEVED THAT SECURITY TIES COULD BEST BE STRENGTHENED BY ACHIEVING SUBSTANTIVE ECONOMIC AND DEVELOPMENTAL COOPERATION.

4. KIDWINGIRA POINTED OUT THAT THE COMMUNITY HAD ALREADY OBTAINED SIGNIFICANT SUPPORT FROM SEVERAL OUTSIDE ORGANIZATIONS, INCLUDING ECA, WHICH HAD AGREED TO ESTABLISH A TECHNICAL STUDIES OFFICE AT CEPGL HEAD-QUARTERS IN GISENYI. ALSO, VARIOUS UN AGENCIES HAVE PROMISED TO SUPPLY TECHNICAL ADVISERS TO ASSIST IN DESIGNING AND DEVELOPING REGIONAL ECONOMIC PROJECTS (HE HOPED USG WOULD ALSO PROVIDE TECHNICAL HELP FOR THIS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PURPOSE). CEPGL REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT BANK HAS BEEN PROMISED SOME FUNDING BY AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT FUND (AGAIN, KIDWINGIRA HOPES USG WILL ALSO PURCHASE SHARES).

5. COMMENTING I KNEW HOW ENTHUSIASTIC BOTH RWANDAN AND BURUNDI GOVERNMENTS WERE ABOUT COMMUNITY, I ASKED WHAT SUPPORT IT HAD IN KINSHASA. KIDWINGIRA ASSURED ME THAT PRESIDENT MOBUTU AND FONMIN UMBA WERE BOTH VERY KEEN ON CEPGL, ABOVE ALL, HE SAID, AS MECHANISM FOR STRENGTHENING ZAIRE'S POLITICAL RELATIONS WITH TWO EASTERN NEIGHBORS. HE NOTED THAT ZAIRE HAD MADE SPECIAL CONCESSIONS WITH REGARD TO RUZIZI HYDROELECTRIC FACILITY AT NTARUKA IN ORDER TO ASSURE COMMUNITY'S SUCCESS. HE ALSO NOTED THAT USG WAS ASSISTING IN DEVELOPMENT OF RUZIZI VALLEY ON ZAIRE SIDE AND THEREFORE ALREADY CONTRIBUTING TO REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT.

6. COMMENT: I SUSPECT KIDWINGIRA'S APPROACH TO US WAS INSTIGATED BY CHIEFS OF STATE THEMSELVES, PERHAPS AT BUJUMBURA SUMMIT MEETING. THEY MUST HAVE KNOWN PITCH FOR HELP ON GROUNDS OF ENHANCING REGIONAL COOPERATION -- PARTICULARLY BETWEEN RWANDA AND BURUNDI -- WOULD BE

MUSIC TO OUR EARS IN BOTH POLITICAL AND HUMAN RIGHTS CONTEXTS. WHETHER COMMUNITY MAKES ANY ECONOMIC SENSE IS SOMETHING ELSE AGAIN, AND I URGE THAT QUESTION BE STUDIED. CERTAINLY POSSIBILITIES WOULD SEEM TO EXIST FALLING NEATLY WITHIN AID'S "NEW DIRECTIONS": E.G., FISH CULTURE; EXPLOITATION OF PEAT AS ALTERNATIVE HOME-USE ENERGY SOURCE; METHANE GAS IN LAKE KIVU, AND ABOVE ALL FOOD/DEMOGRAPHY CRISIS WHICH THREATENS ENTIRE REGION.

7. ACTION REQUESTED: ALTHOUGH REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEMES ARE ALWAYS FRAUGHT WITH ENORMOUS POLITICAL AND TECHNICAL DRAWBACKS, THIS MODEST EFFORT SEEMS TO US TO DESERVE OUR SYMPATHETIC CONSIDERATION AT LEAST. IN COMING WEEKS, THIS POST INTENDS TO FOLLOW CEPGL MORE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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CLOSELY AND LOOK MORE DEEPLY INTO ITS POTENTIAL AS MECHANISM FOR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT. WE INVITE ADDRESSEES TO DO SAME AND WOULD APPRECIATE THEIR VIEWS AS TO (A) WHETHER COMMUNITY MAKES SENSE FROM THEIR VANTAGE POINT AND (B) HOW WE MIGHT EVENTUALLY GO ABOUT ESTABLISHING MORE ACTIVE RELATIONSHIP WITH CEPGL.

8. DRAFTER: AMB.
CRIGLER

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